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INTEGRITY

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Subject = The Meaning of God

February, 1949

Vol. 3, No. 5

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INTEGRITY is published by lay Catholics and
dedicated to the task of discovering the new
synthesis of **RELIGION** and **LIFE** for our times.

Vol. 3, No. 5

February 1949

Published Monthly by Integrity Publishing Co., 346 East 86th Street, New York 28, N. Y., TR 9-5176. Edited by Edward Willock and Carol Jackson. Entered as Second Class Matter October 14, 1946 at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the Act of March 3, 1897. All single copies 25 cents each; yearly subscriptions: domestic \$3.00, Canadian \$3.50, Foreign \$4.00.

INTEGRITY IS INDEXED IN THE CATHOLIC PERIODICAL INDEX.

EDITORIAL

THIS month we are serving a good-sized ration of spiritual meat and potatoes. The cuisine is French. The chef is His Eminence, Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris. We had intended to devote this February issue to the subject of the Catholic Press, since this is the appointed month for that fine instrument to receive its annual once-over. However, events conspired in such a way and in our favor so that we have the privilege of using our own tiny segment of that Press for a purpose befitting its sacred mission. There is a better way of displaying the quality of its steel than to ring its sword mightily in battle. Thanks to His Eminence's good right arm, truth is well championed in this month's pages. The Catholic Press is praised in service.

Let us tell you how it came about that we chose to print in its entirety this Easter Pastoral Letter of 1948, addressed initially and immediately to the faithful of Paris, but substantially and inevitably to the world. Father Joseph Lamontagne, a French priest of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, hurries by our office window every day, shuttling between Saint Jean-Baptiste's rectory on Seventy-sixth Street and his spiritual charges at Misericordia Hospital just down the street from us. One day, not long ago, he stopped in, with but a moment to spare, to inquire if we would be interested in seeing his translation of this document. He had performed the labor during his short vacation period for his own edification, but then, it was so good—perhaps we would gain something from reading it? We were delighted! Cardinal Suhard's 1947 Pastoral Letter, published by Fides (*Growth or Decline*), had made a tremendous impact on us and we had recommended it many, many times.

As we read the translation it proved to be an admirable sequel to the previous Pastoral, and even more clarifying and eloquent than its predecessor. After making certain that no other American publisher had designs on it, we sought and received permission to publish it, and, as the French say, *voilà!*

We Americans are not without a provincial pride, and some may question such intent preoccupation with the Gaul. France, long with her European neighbor-nations, is badly in need of aid from America. We should be unwise if we felt that they had nothing to give us in return. We are a hungry people and the

Daughter of the Faith has been busy baking a bread to assuage that hunger. We need not take the bread, for we can bake our own, but let us not ignore the recipe. Lay apostolicity in France is now in its second generation. The Holy Ghost has been providing an access into the secular world and the lump is beginning to leaven. We are sure that Cardinal Suhard would admit that this document here printed could not have been conceived except as the fruit of a generation of Catholicism *lived*. Christ has need of His members and it is the quickening of the members in faith and good works that makes possible a testament as great as this. We would be rash not to accept such rations from the French branch of the family.

Someone has remarked that America is the hope of the Pope. There is good reason for supposing that there is more truth than poetry in such a statement. We have been late to rally to this cause, when one considers the maturity of the apostolates in France and Belgium, and the fact that Catholic Action was a going thing in Italy prior to 1920. Cannot our tardiness, however, be more than compensated for if we gratefully incorporate into our scheme the vast treasury of experiences made available by those who have labored through the heat of the noonday? The Faith is a family affair, and the baby who has older and smarter brothers and sisters will always learn more quickly and with less effort. It will not be the first time, nor the last, that the sacrifices of one segment of the Christian body will merit holiness for the whole.

A point in reference to the present Pastoral Letter might be made to illustrate our good fortune for having such splendid neighbors. Much stress has been placed by those in the apostolate upon the matter of making Christ *incarnate* in our lives. We are all familiar with the growing emphasis on the doctrines of Christ in our neighbor, in our homes and in our shops. Many are the facts that have been recalled proving that Christ is human, that He labored, slept and ate, much in the fashion of a common workman in any age. His intimacy with us, His familiarity, His brotherhood, have provided inspiring meditations for all those impatient to annex their hearts and environs to His dominion.

Emphasis on this aspect of divinity has providentially counteracted the still prevailing mood among so many who limit Christ's terrestrial sphere almost exclusively to the tabernacle. The fact of Christ's presence in souls through grace, and the ever present opportunity of intimacy with Him in our good works regardless of where we may be, is still a neglected doctrine among many, if not the majority, of Catholics.

Now it is certain that those who are in the forefront of the revival, the leaders (so often anonymous), will race whereas others will move at a snail's pace. How particularly fortunate for these to be afforded direction from a leader who has scouted and campaigned far into the territory across whose borders they have just recently crossed! In this letter he returns to warn such leaders of the danger that lies ahead if they over-stress the glorious doctrine of Christ's friendliness and humanity to the neglect of the complementary doctrine of God's eternal, unfathomable mysteriousness, and His all-sufficiency. Here, in this advice, is a providential opportunity for more rapid maturation in Christ and in His apostolate. If such warnings are heeded, our feet will soon find a safer and swifter road.

We are very honored in having the privilege of bringing this splendid document to the attention of our readers.

THE EDITORS

Please Note: We are, as a rule, quite generous with our permission to reprint material from these pages. This is an exception. The French publishers retain all copyright privileges and we are not in a position to grant permission to reprint extensive excerpts from the Cardinal's letter.

Because we expect it to be well received among you, we have printed a considerable quantity of this issue, and we make it available, whether singly or in bulk, at 25 cents a copy from this address.

Except for this issue (February, 1949) all other back copies have been exhausted.



THE MEANING OF GOD

Beloved Brethren:

A year ago we spoke to you about the Church. This year we wish to speak to you about God. It is a logical sequence, for the mystery of the Spouse of Christ leads us quite naturally to the mystery of the Supreme Being.

We are prompted to speak to you about God chiefly because hardly anyone does speak of Him. In this world which He has made He no longer has His rightful place. He has become the Absent One. Can we remain cold-hearted and silent in the face of such a serious situation? It is more than a mystical inspiration that moves us. It is an aching in our heart, a premonition of danger, a rallying cry that rises from the depths of our soul and goes out to you, like that cry of anguish flung far and wide by the Poverello of Assisi: "He Who is Love is not loved!"

We address this appeal to all our flock. With some indeed it will fall on deaf ears, but at least the truth will have been preached to them. For the others who will listen, may it lead them to a fruitful examination of conscience.



I

THE ABSENCE OF GOD

Contemporary society has been characterized in many ways; it has been called the mechanical age, the century of relativism, and so forth. But there is one feature of our civilization which places it in a class of its own apart from all previous ones. It is a godless society.

OUR MODERN WORLD

This absence of God from our life which draws down upon us the contempt of various non-Christian peoples is more than a surface evil. The absence of God is not "geographical," as though only certain parts of our society had escaped its blight. It is an absence of God that has molded our society in all its phases; it is a condition that has been brought about by systematic effort; God is absent, banished, expelled, from the very heart of life. Society has crystallized around this exclusion of God and is dying from its own emptiness. It is a desert without God.

One would have to write a volume, rather than a letter, to enumerate all the forms taken by this modern atheism. We need only look at the advertisements that cover our walls, the pictures in our magazines, the headlines in our dailies, the publicity given to certain films and novels, to be convinced of this. We have no intention of presenting in these few pages a complete analysis, which would call for a multitude of distinctions.

Our intention is not to enumerate the manifestations of this absence of God, but to make you realize the fact so keenly that it hurts. For we must flee this slow asphyxiation in utter revulsion. Leon Bloy wrote, "The Creator has been banished from city and country life, from laws, arts, and morals. He has been banished

even from piety, that is, those who still wish to be His most intimate friends have no need of His presence."

This last sentence may surprise you. And yet, why should you wonder that even Christians are tainted with this universal atheism? Can one breathe in this foul air without being contaminated by it? All the senses drink in this subtle poison, the more dangerous because it does not kill its victims but renders them unconscious of the harm it does them. We need not go far to find godless people; we meet them at every step. A great many baptized souls, while not actually atheists, nevertheless act as if they were.

Catholics in Name Only

First in line are those nominal Catholics who go to Church only on solemn occasions. Can they be said to have a true understanding of what God is? True, a family spirit or custom leads them to perform certain seasonal acts of devotion, but do they possess a true faith? Is their piety not an empty formality? Proof of this can be seen in their actions. Their conduct does not differ from that of the non-believers among whom they live. They read the same books, take part in the same amusements, and share the same viewpoints on life in general and current events. Their spiritual poverty is particularly obvious in their concept of family life. Not only are they incredibly tolerant of divorce, companionate marriage, abortion and contraception, but at times they even advocate such evils. Does this statement seem too harsh?

What type of education can such parents give? Even the poorest parents put forth the most praiseworthy efforts to provide for their children's needs, but in a material way only. Health and hygiene are the idols for whose sake all else is sacrificed. All that pertains to the formation of a Christian soul—conscience, religious faith, the spirit of self-denial, an apostolic zeal—are entirely ignored or looked at askance. Parents consider such things unnecessary. No wonder, then, that adolescents systematically left to their own devices in the name of unrestricted freedom, swell the rising tide of juvenile delinquency, or, at least, lead a purely materialistic life, believing, as do their parents, that death will be the end of all. How many of those who have been baptized weep in the presence of death like "those who have no hope"?

Practicing Catholics

Even those practicing Catholics who have not completely surrendered to materialism have to a great extent lost the understanding of what God is. Assistance at Sunday Mass and very often even the reception of the Sacraments have become a sort of

rutine that they fall into. For them religion is a form of insur-
ce, or a mark of good breeding. Religious duties are performed
though they were some necessary but tiresome formality
quiring sacrifice on the same level as social conventions. It
true that moral principals are more strict in this type of life
and that conduct is more often based on duty. But what place
does God have in such a scheme of life? It would be unfair
to assert that He is entirely forgotten. Many are bound to
Him much more than they themselves realize or seem to be.
Their faith comes to life from time to time on the occasion of
some great ecclesiastical or historical event. Nevertheless, in their
lives as a whole, God is not a personal God for them. He is a
principle, some colorless form of abstraction. They no longer
listen to Christ's awe-inspiring and revolutionary words. The
Gospel does not enter into the shaping of their lives. Is it any
wonder, then, that so many Christian lives are fruitless or that
non-believers are scandalized at seeing such lives bearing little or
no witness to the faith that is in them.

The Attitude of Christians

Some Christians have become deeply conscious of this scandal.
Stirred to an understanding of the contemporary catastrophe by a
thorough religious formation, they have chosen God and dedicated
themselves to the service of the Church with a spirit whose
generosity compels the admiration of France and of the world.

The Pursuit of Spiritual Values

For some twenty years a splendid effort, begun with the
introduction of Catholic Action, has been at work to spread the
spirit of Christ gradually in all walks of life. For a long time
the Church had been put aside but now many of the barriers which
separated the modern world and the Christian tradition seem to
be lifting. We see a widespread renewal of the ideals of marriage
and the family. Many young couples daily give proof that an
integral Christian life is possible under ordinary living conditions.

Among other successful educational projects we can point
to the Scout movement. (Editor's note: The French Boy Scout
movement has been integrated with Catholic training much more
than in the United States.) Here the young boy who aspires
to chivalrous strength and enthusiasm learns to find in union with
Christ the energy to build his personality. Thanks to Catholic
Action both general and specialized, and especially to the J.O.C.
(Young Christian Workers Movement), an authentic spirituality
now permeates the efforts of workers and students. They know
they need not turn away from their daily tasks to win the world

to Christ and to sanctify their souls. They spontaneously bring this mysticism into their civil and social life, not only to establish the life of the Church in society, but also to inaugurate everywhere that union which reproduces the City of God in this world.

Philosophy and theology, far from excluding the viewpoint of literary or scientific humanism, have striven remarkably well for a more complete integration of a number of intellectual subjects, such as history, the concept of progress, and so forth. Finally, thanks to the assistance of the laity, great progress has been made in spreading the message of the Gospel. It is true there are still traces of the old policy of separatism. However, a resurgence of the Catholic spirit is gaining ground, especially in connection with parochial life. All this indicates that certain things to which we have become accustomed are now outmoded and bound to be absorbed and re-made by the vital spark at work on them.

From such concerted efforts we see that a wide area has been removed from the purely "profane" realm and placed under the aegis of the Holy Spirit. "All pertains to the realm of grace" might be the watchword and the outcome of this unprecedented activity.

The Neglect of Spiritual Ideals

Without yielding to a morbid tendency toward self-criticism for a long time prevalent among us, we must nevertheless recognize the urgent need of a reorientation. This examination of conscience to which we are inviting all our militant Catholics has no reference whatsoever to their dedication to Christian ideals. What we asked of them last year as one of the conditions essential to the "Growth of the Church" we repeat now with the same emphasis. The salvation of the world will result from the presence of Christians in it. Now, more than in any other period of history, they must first become the moving force of existing institutions and then foresee and bring about the improvements so sorely needed. It would be contrary to our mind for anyone to use our study of conditions to justify a destructive scepticism or a culpable lack of interest. Anyone who criticizes without attempting to correct easily avoids making mistakes, pitfalls that occur only when we try to improve unsatisfactory conditions.

Let everyone understand that we speak not only of existing errors; this study to which we invite you includes also dangers that may arise. It takes in tendencies and directions as well as facts. The whole problem may be summed up in this main question: "Do we have the 'right understanding' of God?" In other words, does our pagan environment influence us in a subtle

y? Has our concept of God remained pure and elevated enough? Have we always pursued our temporal occupations in the light of faith? Without this light the reforms we strive for, lacking a firm foundation, would be ineffective. Is there not danger that our ideas about the human person blur the true notion of God? In short, is God still God to us?

IN THE REALM OF FAITH

The Toning Down of Doctrine

My dear brethren, the first danger refers to the proper understanding of what God is. Usually we insist on whatever brings Him closer to humanity, on God the Father rather than God the Master. He is "Our Father," but more on earth than "in heaven." We think of Him as the "Good Lord" rather than as the Supreme Judge. Of the Word of God we dwell on the attribute "incarnate." Jesus Christ has become a great boon for many souls as the Friend, the Confidant, the Model of our living, our Elder Brother. But we give only a secondary place to His Sacred Humanity which referred all things to His Father and was absolutely faithful to His Father. So, too, we tend to overlook His Divine Person, Who grafts us on to the inner life of the Love within the Trinity. Our age has by the grace of God rediscovered the extraordinary brotherly relationship of the Son of Man to us, but on the other hand it has lost sight of the mystery of His Sonship to God. Spirituality is based largely on the dogma of the Incarnation but often in an incomplete way.

We still see in the coming of God a prodigious means of restoration, and in His intervention in events the definite purpose and clear meaning of history. But if we stop at this role of Christ, forgetting that He was to lead man to God, we are in danger of considering God a means to help humanity rather than as the Being Who is self-sufficient and has no need of us. In short, we may stress the immanence¹ of God at the risk of forgetting His transcendence.

The Meaning of Humanity

What is the result of this? Almost imperceptibly, by an understandable process of contagion, the great systems and great human activities of our modern world not only influence our minds and emotions, they mold the very foundations of our faith. At every step our "sense of humanity" tends to replace in us our sense of God."

The discoveries of science divert us to technology and to domination over inert matter. The "doer" in this struggle against

all forms of subjection replaces the "thinker" and his disinterested pursuit of knowledge. Keeping pace with the increasing power of man over matter is the increase of his autonomy and freedom. Man knows; he has power; he is self-sufficient; he becomes the focal point of his pursuits. Most of the thought of modern philosophy tends perversely to atheistic humanism. Years ago, discussions centered on some point of doctrine. That was a period of heresies. In the last century the whole content of divine truth was under discussion. But a certain deism was always tolerated. Now the denial is all-embracing; the sin of the modern world is, as in the times of the Old Testament, idolatry—the idolatry of man.

Substitution for the Meaning of God

This substitution is clear-cut in the case of atheists. It is also to be found in a lesser degree and under a more subtle form even among the "Children of Light." For them, anthropocentrism is most likely to be the death-dealing poison. It consists in the substitution of values; in grafting God on to humanity and not humanity on to God. "It is not God as He is in Himself that is of interest to the human mind, but the origin of man and the world in which he lives that is to be explained. Once this explanation has been found, it is useless to see further . . . we are not interested in God as He is in Himself, but only in man in his relations to God. . . ."²

The attitude is that God is at the service of humanity, that He has a task to perform in its favor: that of fostering the full development of the individual or of society at large.

Once accepted, this substitution of viewpoints would destroy religion itself, and would be in direct contradiction to the teaching of Holy Scripture, of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. The God, cut down to our size, this God tailored to human measuring would not be God.

Practical Consequences

Those who look upon this discussion as being too theoretical should study the different aspects of our modern Christian life. They will find to what degree this latent peril produces tangible results.

Contemplation Misjudged

The first result is discernible in devotional life. The prayer of worship and of homage is not well understood because the inner value of the virtue of religion and of the theological virtues is hardly accepted. Faith is often considered to be like the mystical theories of our times which dedicate their devotees to an entire

man cause. The Christians are aware of the existence of God themselves. "They fear to think of Him as He is in Himself though this were not to be studied at all."³

As a result, people are led to consider contemplative prayer something belonging exclusively to monastic life; the faithful find God in all places by reason of His immanence.

Sacredness Forgotten

Another result is that the sacramental life and the liturgical life lose some of their mystery. By seeing God only as an intimate friend, one loses sight of His sacredness. Parish priests and ritual directors notice, in consequence of this, a gradually diminishing sense of the nature of sin and this leads to indifference toward the Sacrament of Penance. It is noticeable that even devout people no longer realize fully the stain caused by sin and the sorrow which should follow any act of ingratitude against God. As a concession, humility is identified with a natural moderation, purity with hygiene, and charity with philanthropy. Over and over one hears—and quite to the point—the encouraging statement, "Sacraments are for the welfare of souls." But people do not reflect sufficiently on the fact that the purpose of an easy and constant access to the Sacraments is so that souls may be caught up and borne along the currents of praise and thanksgiving which flow from earth toward God through Christ Our Lord. Emptied of this basic content, the Sacraments quickly become lifeless rites.

The same holds true for the priesthood. Because some are led to identify priests with militant groups of which they are the most zealous and dedicated members, their special mission of offering the Holy Sacrifice is almost forgotten. There is too much emphasis being placed on the role of the faithful at Mass. The shortage of vocations may well be due to an overrating of the married life, an outstanding and praiseworthy vocation, but it may also be due to insufficient understanding of priestly or religious consecration, and of celibacy considered as the choosing of God alone.

Loss of the Sense of Mystery in the Liturgy

This misunderstanding concerning the priest's role is but one of many aspects of that loss of the sense of the mystery to be found so often in the liturgy. While it is a good thing that lay people are no longer strangers to the richness of the words and official rites of the Church, too detailed explanations of worship often destroy the essential element of mystery. Dialogue prayers show real progress, but mediocre commentaries, especially those that

break in on the silence of the Consecration at Mass, can rightly be considered a burden and a hindrance to many souls.

IN THE ACTIVE LIFE

An "Active" Holiness

In the active life as well we see this failure to keep in sight the true meaning of God. Some tend to value the active life above contemplation and even above sacrifice. Holiness is often considered as an admirable humanism and as the human personality's full development. As a reaction to the negative morality of old, a list of so-called "active virtues" is offered to challenge the ardor of our young people. To avoid the evils of formalism, any spiritual check, often any asceticism, is frowned upon. Love includes and replaces everything else. Never before has the primacy of love been so extolled. This attitude is based on a rather broad interpretation of Saint Augustine's words: "Love and do what thou wilt."

In short, mortification is assumed to be only for religious obedience even more so. Many lay people consider the hierarchy a stumbling block. Instead of seeing in it the emanation and wonderful continuation through the centuries of the mystery of Christ's very Person, they look upon it merely as a complicated administrative body. No wonder, then, that its authority, likened to that of the civil power, is often called to account. Instead of seeing God, such people see only the human person.

Effectiveness as a Criterion

The faithful, in their admirably generous zeal to save their brethren, especially those who are strangers to the Faith, are in danger of being infected by a modern disease, activism. Activity and success are rated above all else. No value is placed upon the free deed, the "useless" service that does not affect history. The value of failure is rarely appreciated. The true apostolate consists in communicating the message of the Gospels to others. Some tend rather to judge by success. It is easy to find the reason for this. In our industrial age all is counted, weighed and measured. The consent of the mind is sought through publicity and propaganda. No wonder that such a method is carried over into the realm of souls. No wonder, either, that the messengers of Christ are tempted to use the methods and systems which lead to worldly success. Is it not true that many rely more on their own resources than on grace? Can we not ascribe to this attitude the increasing neglect of the Sacraments? Natural means are often

preferred to such incomparable means as the Holy Eucharist and Penance. All this indicates clearly that even those concerned with the things of the spirit are losing sight of what God really is.

Militants at the Crossroads

At the end of this rather lengthy analysis touching only certain phases of our modern piety, we are forced to draw this conclusion. The deviations which we have pointed out and which we exhort all to consider a grave peril, have names well known and almost interchangeable: naturalism, pragmatism, subjectivism, secularism, and so forth. This is not mere coincidence, but rather a linking of cause and effect. Not in vain have these systems of philosophy gained so much ground in our Western world. They have sown seeds which have grown unchecked among non-believers, and among Christians in a subtle yet effective way.

In the Realm of Philosophy

Among both groups mentioned above these systems have a common denominator which makes them one. They are a philosophy of man. This philosophy in turn tends to opposite directions which divide contemporary thought into two different trends.

The first, that of the optimists, believes the universe capable of indefinite progress, the conclusion of a fatal dialectic which holds that the use of technical methods will bring about absolute happiness for the world. According to this, our first duty is to hope in the future, to strive for progress, to attain by all possible means full possession of the world.

On the other hand there is the trend of thought which leads to pessimism. Everything is to be referred to man as he exists in himself. But such an existence is absurd as it has no reason for its own being. It has no definite goal, no meaning whatsoever. Abundant proof of this lies in the failures of science and civilization. Our pursuits should tend to be, therefore, not a zestful adventure to create a better world, but a lucid and despairing striving toward nothingness.

In the Realm of Theology

The thought-trend of militant Christians, whether by effect or coincidence, swings pendulumlike to similar views, but in another intellectual domain. On the whole these too are divided into two groups; rather each individual of these groups finds his conscience beset with the most difficult alternatives. We pointed out this dilemma of Catholics last year in our Pastoral on the Church. As she stands face to face with the world, what is to be her attitude, separation or adaptation? The problem reappears

in the field we are discussing but as a wider and more fundamental issue, for the whole problem of humanism and of God is raised. How does our understanding of what God is stand in relation to our understanding of what man is? What rights has human society in relation to the kingdom of God?

Transcendence and Separation

On the one hand the extremists place no value on this world. It is not to be sought for its own sake; nay, we should not even try to better it or change it, because it is corrupt beyond hope of recovery. It is an evil world. It is a closed world. Bound in the toils of technical methods and viewed in the light of history, it has no place for a "conversion." The world and grace belong to two different categories leading to separation and not to reconciliation. The duty of believers is not to influence events or institutions, but to be witnesses, even to the point of scandal, to the transcendence of the Eternal God.

This theory is based on two facts. First, it recognizes the many errors we have pointed out in the modern life of faith and concludes from them that, spiritually, humanism is a failure, a barrier between the soul and God. It is a fruitless task to endeavor to put God into the world. It is the enduring temptation of trying to establish an earthly paradise. It is a sin of idolatry. There is only one avenue of escape: to return to a transcendent God, taking shelter completely in the mystery of an absolute and sovereign Being in Whose presence any interest in worldly affairs is a detour and a waste of time.

Is not this made more clear, as the world flounders, by the invincible impulse in man which leads him to seek outside himself the means he lacks to be elevated above his own nature? Among non-believers this impulse is shown in their obscure substitutions for God, deifications both idolatrous and captivating. Brotherhood, progress, peace, humanitarianism are as so many impersonal substitutions for the God Who is not known and Whose help is not sought.

Then, too, how could the extraordinary fascination felt by many Catholics today for certain oriental religions be explained except by saying that they find in these religions a revelation of the Absolute and of the contemplation of God which western Christianity, all taken up with natural means, is unable to give them to the same degree.

But the need of returning to a transcendent God may be found not only in Hinduism and theosophy. It can be found also in the Church. The faithful are on the lookout for new apparitions

and mystical phenomena. The prejudiced readiness to accept such phenomena and the deliberate waiving of the rules of discernment which greets them (in contrast to the rational prudence of the Church) show the great hunger of souls which a humanized Christianity no longer satisfies.

Immanence and "Incarnation"

In answer to this mystical impulse and opposing supernaturalism, the disciples of immanence point to the great event of the Incarnation. God sent His Son into the world, and set Him up as the Ideal Model of man. He did this to show us the path to follow: we are to go to God through man—by the Sacred Humanity which the Word assumed. If He drenched the world with His blood, how can we, without blasphemy, hold that this shedding of blood was not for the world's redemption? Should not the follower of Christ set himself to work in the world to complete the redemption effected by his Leader?

However, even those who have bravely chosen to dedicate themselves within the temporal order (and without restating the reason for this urgent duty, we merely exhort all to look upon this duty as such) have no peace of mind.

For they are aware that those who are striving to perfect creation, to "increase and possess the land," to organize the world in the likeness of the kingdom of heaven, are in danger of being so engrossed in beautifying the earthly city that they may lose sight of the kingdom of which the earthly one is but an image and to which it is a path. Then comes something like a degradation of objects as to their real value, and in that process what is essentially Christian becomes meaningless and disappears. The spirit of the apostolate becomes mere proselytism, or a drive to increase membership. Charity becomes philanthropy or group good-fellowship. Hope becomes merely a belief in the possibility of indefinite progress. Faith in humanity strips the human person of the very thing that constitutes his title to nobility: namely, that he is unable to be fully himself except by rising above himself and seeking that which is higher than himself.

Undoubtedly there is no more cruel disillusionment for a Christian, and no sadder blow to an apostolic movement, than this inconsequential result of their efforts, so often found in the course of history. An apostle goes forth as a joyful messenger of the Good News; he knows he must go far to reach those who have no leaders. He must overcome their prejudices, sympathize with their aspirations, and accept their common lot. And after this long preparatory work has been done, just as he is to start on

his special task, just as he is in touch with the people and feels that he has become close to them and like one of them—suddenly he finds himself empty-handed. The message he has come to announce has become meaningless, the treasure he bore has been wasted. He has imitated, but in reverse, the action of the merchant of the Gospel who sold all his goods to buy the priceless pearl.⁴ In his case the divine treasure has been squandered, and he has only human gifts to offer. In vain does he multiply his generous and friendly deeds; he is no longer able to fulfill the expectations of those whom he wants to save. For "not by bread alone does man live,"⁵ nor by well-being, or devotedness, or human affection. Whatever name you may give to his need, man hungers for God.

Recourse to Doctrine

Catholics dedicated to the apostolate are aware of this problem, and this leads to hesitancy in action.

To those who take stock of themselves and who sincerely seek to know how they should proceed, we wish, this year, to show the right path to follow.

To those who on good grounds reject a naturalism that brings God down to our level, and who on that account are loathe to see the presence of God in the world, we wish to show that the Infinite Being is present to all creation and awaits our efforts to consecrate the world to Him.

For those who, because of their ardor in temporal pursuits, are in danger of losing sight of the absolute transcendence of God, we shall have this reminder: He Who became one of us still remains the Unique and Separated One.

The theology of God provides the means of reconciling these two one-sided viewpoints by showing that they complement one another; also it will give us a proper understanding of what man is through a right understanding of what God is. In the third part of this pastoral we shall indicate the conclusions to be drawn from this impartial study.





II

THE TRUE GOD

The Knowledge of God

To what sources shall we go for a true knowledge of God? The Church specifically points to two, the first of which is human reason. Reason proves the existence of God and leads us to a limited yet substantial knowledge of His nature. The Council of the Vatican pointed out this twofold power—and duty—of the human mind: "Anathema to the one who would affirm that the One and True God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be known with certainty by the native powers of the human mind by the use of reason."⁶

But, the fact is, quite rightly, that this incomplete knowledge is eclipsed by a knowledge infinitely deeper and warmer which comes through Revelation. Pascal said, "God speaks well of God," but man is unable to do so. Hence the Christian will find in the Bible the teachings of God concerning Himself. Other sources of this doctrine will be Tradition, the teachings of the Church and the writings of the Doctors, all of which are living and complementary sources of our belief.

Our intention is not, in fact, to recall or even to outline a treatise on God in these few pages. We intend merely by the use of some quotations from the inspired text to show that God reveals Himself, always and at the same time, in a twofold manner which seems to be contradictory; at one time, transcendent and separated, at another time present to mankind and immanent to the world.

The Great High God

We advise those who are content within this closed and stifling world to open the pages of the Old and New Testaments.

They will, in these pages, come upon vistas that free the mind and give a soul-satisfying knowledge of the true God.

Mysteriousness

The first impression from their contact with God will be one of His mysteriousness. God is the Inaccessible One, and for all. "No one has ever seen God," says Saint John.⁷ He remains a hidden God even for those to whom He imparts some knowledge of Himself. Moses asked of God, "Permit me to see Thy Face," but God denied this favor in a categorical way: "Thou shalt not see My Face, for no one can see My Face and live."⁸ There is no illusion possible in this matter; God remains the Incommunicable One. The human mind has no key to unlock the Secret of God. As the intelligence delves into the problem, there arises a feeling of terror and a mental paralysis in the presence of this impenetrable mystery.

All that man knows of God is that he cannot fully know Him; at most he sees the fleeting shadow of God across creation. The inner reality of God remains inaccessible to the probing mind: "Verily Thou art a hidden God."⁹ "We realize the greatness of God," wrote Gregory of Nyssa, "not by fully understanding it but rather by seeing that it eludes the searching of the mind in its quest of an insight into God."¹⁰ Saint Augustine affirmed the same thing: "God is not what you imagine Him to be . . . what you think He is, is not so." So too, Saint Thomas Aquinas makes no attempt to build up vain hopes or help us in our ignorance of God.¹¹ We know God when we know that we know Him not.

The Method of Analogy

This conclusion does not signify, as some philosophers affirm, that God cannot be known by the human mind, but only shows the powerlessness of the created mind to comprehend and grasp the Infinite Being. God is absolutely measureless. Christian philosophy teaches that there are two ways of knowing God. The first—*via excellentiae*—consists in attributing to God all that we know of created perfections, and affirming them to an infinite degree; we try, by thus passing beyond the limitations of created perfections, to sense something of the infinite and uncreated perfection of God. Such is the mental process employed in the principle of causality and of analogy; thus our knowledge of God is neither non-existent nor false, nor exhaustive; it is incomplete and relative.

The Method of Negation

But there is another process for the mind to follow in going to God: the road of negation—*via negationis*. This is the reverse of the first mental process. In order to avoid affirming something

contradictory to the Infinite God by placing Him in one of our "categories," it denies to God all that we are; it attributes to Him all the qualities we do not possess.¹² Not only philosophers and theologians but also—and especially—mystics, have thus sought God by denying any measurement common to God and man. "The being of creatures compared to the Infinite Being of God is nothing. . . . Among created beings there is not one who comes close to God or resembles Him."¹³ There is not only a difference of degree, but a difference of nature. "I am He Who is; you are one who is not," said Our Lord to Saint Catherine of Siena. "Any created being, viewed in its nature, is nothingness."¹⁴ Saint John of the Cross goes even further: "All the beauty, all the gracefulness and attractiveness of created beings are, in comparison with the beauty of God, nothing but extreme hideousness . . . something revolting."

These affirmations and many others of the same type are not rhetorical overstatements, nor are they to be taken as a condemnation of the Creator's work; they simply emphasize the absolute transcendence of God.

THE SEPARATED BEING

The Holy One

Even when God reveals Himself, He remains the Separated Being, the Other One. An impassible abyss divides His spotless holiness from weak and sin-stained man. "Come not nigh hither; put off the shoes from thy feet," God commands from the Burning Bush.¹⁵ For He is the "Holy One of Israel."¹⁶ Fear and trembling are the attitudes the most suitable to the recognition of His Majesty. Even in heaven there must always be adoration: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty."¹⁸ In the presence of God every son of Adam becomes aware of an inner unworthiness which makes him unfit to continue in existence. God has no equal: "To whom have ye likened Me, or made Me equal, saith the Holy One."¹⁰

The Sovereign

For this reason He is the Lord, the Sovereign. "I am the Lord, and there is no one else."²⁰ He is the Living One Who is self-sufficient, Who has no accounts to render to us, to Whom are due all homage and submission: "I am the Lord thy God . . . jealous."²¹ God is a free Master; His Revelation breaks in on human existence and overthrows settled conditions. Abraham must leave Ur in Chaldea.²² In spite of first refusals, Moses shall lead his people through the desert.²³ The interests of God take precedence over ours. He has a set purpose; His ways are

inscrutable. He is the Master of time and history which unfolds in harmony with His Will. "My ways are exalted above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts."²⁴ This power of God over the unfolding of the universe is something man cannot understand, for man explains time according to his own wishes.

What holds good for the Old Testament, holds good also for the New Testament. "The Revelation given to Moses and to the Prophets was not destroyed but completed by the Gospel. The affirmation that there is only one God and Lord, to be loved above all else, is a truth sacred to the Christians as much as, if not even more than, it was to the Jews."²⁵ Our Lord reminds His hearers over and over again of the infinite majesty of His Father: "Why dost thou call Me good? No one is good but God only."²⁶ His supremacy is not shared with anyone: "But do not you be called 'Rabbi,' for one is your Master . . . and call no one on earth your father, for one is your Father, Who is in heaven."²⁷ Our Lord disconcerted His hearers as much as Jehovah had disconcerted their ancestors. Israel was expecting a victorious Messiah, and the Son of Man announces the ruin of Jerusalem, and the Cross. The mystery of Divine Providence is above human understanding. Here also, God is the Separated One.²⁸

The Negation of Humanism

Having arrived at this point, the Christian, it would seem, has no choice left. The path to follow seems to be definitely marked out. He must withdraw from the world, taking shelter in the transcendence of God. With respect to our earthly life, humanism and history seem but ruins. Humanism? How can it be but blasphemy since all creation is valueless; since there is not only an abyss but also a contrast between the High God and the lowly dust that we are?²⁹ How can any interest in the affairs of this passing world be anything but sheer folly in relation to our last end, and an inexcusable slight toward the Eternal God? How can any effort to establish a human order be but a sin of idolatry, which brings down more than does any other sin the wrath of Jehovah? Since God is the Separated One, since He is not "immanent" to His creatures, these cannot constitute themselves in a sphere outside of Him without being against Him. Whatever we do, what man means to us goes directly against what God should mean to us and the true meaning of God is the great lesson oft repeated in the Bible.

The Meaninglessness of History

History would suffer the same fate: since God seems to despise "our ways," since He is interested in our life only to upset the

normal course of events by His disconcerting interventions, we can no longer speak of the future and of the progress of society in terms of large and of temporal institutions. God does not act from within, but from without, in a purely exterior way. He comes to events not from within them, but from out beyond them. Therefore, instead of historical perspectives we must substitute "eschatological" orientations. Our Lord did not teach us to say "Our Father Who art in our hearts," but "Our Father Who art in heaven." There it is that we must, out of pure faith and contempt of earth, seek for Him and find Him, and not in the world.

GOD WITH US

And yet, is this concept of God complete? Does not the Separated Being remain also the Omnipresent One? The whole of Scripture and of Tradition reveals with like certainty this second aspect of God: He has willed to be God-with-us, a God Who gives Himself to us.

The Two Covenants

The revelation of this began in the Old Testament with the idea of a covenant³⁰ which reveals in the beginning and with increasing clarity that God is not only a Mystery of Infinity, but also a Mystery of Love. He invites Israel and later on all nations to divine fellowship. At first it is the imperfect reconciliation of the First "Testament," and then the forgiveness and intimate union of the New Covenant in Christ Jesus. What do the Prophets teach if not this love, harsh yet tender, of the "God of Israel"?³¹ Or if God seems to deny or to upset history, we must not see in that the despising or cruel play of a tyrant, but an untiring exhortation to us to broaden our views. He intervenes from outside, but in order to transform us from within. Abraham must leave his homeland, but he is to become the father of believers; Moses must obey in spite of his reluctance, but it is for the purpose of saving a people; Saint Paul is overthrown on the road to Damascus, but he is to become the Apostle of the Gentiles. The Lord makes use of men and events to fulfill His plan of salvation. Shall we affirm, after that, that He does not direct the course of history? Shall we deny that the "Separated Being" is also the Omnipresent One?

The Omnipresent Being

But, in turn, this presence of God is only one instance of a wider intention and fact: the presence of God in all beings as a result of creation. "In Him we live and move and have our being," says Saint Paul.³² In his splendid chapters of the *Summa*, Saint

Thomas repeats this statement "of the presence of God in all things."³³ "As long as any thing is in existence God must be present to it. Hence the necessary conclusion that God is in all things, and in a most intimate way."³⁴

In this matter reason follows Scripture; not pantheism, not the God of Aristotle, absolutely separated from the world which He does not even know. Pope Pius XII said, "The God of the Christians is not an empty formula . . . or some abstract idea made up by thinkers. He is above all that exists, and all that exists draw its existence from Him. Millions of people may hasten along the street . . . all absorbed in their business . . . without even thinking of Him. And yet . . . it is He Who upholds them in existence."³⁵

And now what is to be said about the presence of God in the soul by grace? It is not only God "the Creator" Who is immanent to the soul; it is a participation in the ultimate life of the Trinity. "We will come to Him and make our abode with Him."³⁶ The last word is said; the mystery is revealed to us: "God is Love."³⁷ Hence the twofold abyss is filled; the Sovereign Lord identified with Love finds His glory in communicating Himself to us. God-in-Himself and the given-God are one and the same. The Holy One is also the Emmanuel, God-with-us. If we forget this wonderful reality, one that is certain, we shall fail to grasp the meaning of God. It would lead us as a result to a "Manichean" concept of the relations between God and the world.

In the Unity of God

Transcendence, immanence; theology reveals these two aspects of God and bids us never to separate one from the other. God is simple, yet our mind is so adapted to understanding the world that it cannot form a mental representation of the Infinite except in its relations to the finite. We must conceive it as being inside visible reality or outside of it, either immanent or transcendent. A believer may be convinced of the limitations of his intelligence in the presence of the Absolute and of the simultaneous truth of its twofold aspect, but he cannot express what his mind arrives at except by placing together two contrary assertions. Consequently there is the risk of retaining only one of the two terms: of seeing God only in opposition to the world—and as a result refusing to have anything to do with the fatal and corrupt dialectics of the world—or on the other hand, of seeing God only in this world and in life, with the danger of deifying both. In each instance one arrives at "laicism": God without the world, or the world without God—each viewpoint the result of a different path followed by the mind.

Those who hold to exclusive transcendence do perceive divine majesty; but at the same time restrict it in an offensive way and hereby deny it altogether. They remove creation from its influence, disregard the government of the universe by Divine Providence, and take no stock of the fact of the Incarnation. As a result, their tendency is to isolate faith from deeds, contemplation from the apostolate, the Church from her temporal aspect. This is an attitude of refusal (to see the whole truth) which takes, at different periods of history and according to the problems and temperaments of people, the form of Quietism, pessimism, or Jansenism.

On the other hand, those who hold to the exclusive immanence of God forget His infinity. In their endeavor to put Him everywhere they finish by removing Him entirely. For what would there be left of a God Who would be present only to the world? Of a God Who would not be present to Himself, of a God Who would not be God? What would be the meaning of an immanence that would be an immanence to nothing or to no one? God must exist before He can become incarnate; likewise the fact that He is immanent requires a continual self-subsistence and self-sufficiency. As indicated above, it is erroneous to put God on a human level so as to make Him closer to us. God is close to us only because He is the High God. His immanence, far from contradicting His transcendence, supposes it at every moment. Without it, the world, far from being intelligible, becomes absurd, inexplicable, or guilty—inexplicable, because it has no purpose; absurd, because it has no reason to exist; guilty, because it endeavors to compete with "Him besides Whom there is no God."³⁸ The way to eliminate the problem is to identify God and the universe, and that is pantheism.

In Love Incarnate

Once more, truth lies in the unity and balance of these two complementary affirmations. The God of Israel is to be called the "True God," because uniting in Himself all perfections He is at the same time Pure Spirit and Creator. He is the One to Whom we can say, "Silence is the praise becoming You," and "Works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord."³⁹ The solution of the problem is not in an abstract formula, but in a living one, for it is in a Person, the Word of God. The Incarnation reveals Him to us "in the form of a slave"⁴⁰ come down among us, but also equal to His Father according to His divine nature. Thus the God of philosophers is transcended, and the Incarnate God is even closer to us than the God of the philanthropists. The Lord Whom we

adore is not a compromise between two excessive viewpoints but the culminating point of each in the mystery of His Person.⁴¹ Here again—here especially—all is united and completed in Love. Love explains all.

Out of Pure Bounty

But one distinction is necessary in applying terms signifying "synthesis" and "unity" to God. The two words, "transcendence" and "immanence," when joined together may deceive us. They may lead us to believe that both are on the same footing, that they are two "perfections" which are complementary and essential to God. But it is not so. For immanence means the presence of God in all creation. But created objects do not exist of necessity. Creation came about from a free act of God; it is not a part of His Nature; it does not add anything to Him.⁴² God subsists without the universe, with His infinite perfections. Hence our brief analysis drawn from the Bible and from theology is to be applied only to an actuality, to a reality which is, but which need not have been or could have been otherwise.

All the viewpoints which the true understanding of the Incarnate God brings to faith and humanism are acceptable only by supposing a plan of salvation which we know from Revelation to be a fact. If we forget that—if we forget that God created the world freely out of love, and that He saved it by His Incarnation brought about by love of men—we lose sight of the true meaning of God and of man.

The Meaning of God and of Man

Both are linked together, but not by a reciprocal dependency, for God is self-sufficient. Immanence and Incarnation are Love absolutely gratuitous on the part of God, but in this wise: that the idea of humanism depends completely on the true idea of God.

If God is only immanent, man is limited to himself, a prisoner in the world unable ever to rise above himself. Such is pagan humanism.

If God is only transcendent, the world loses all significance. It is no longer in touch with truth and love; it is plunged in darkness and in sin—and man falls into unappeasable restlessness.

Condemnation of Humanism?

But if God is "He Who Is"—simultaneously the Supreme One and the One closest to us—all is clear; humanism has a twofold basis.

First, by the fact of creation. A self-dedication to God within the framework of temporal pursuits is justified because the presence of God in the world makes everything a reflection of the Creator.

In man this likeness and presence are more profound, for by reason of his spiritual nature he has been created to the image of God. But God is present in all beings, not only to keep them in existence; He willed, also, out of love alone, to become incarnate in the Person of His Son. This is the second degree of immanence which brings God closer to man and consecrates the world and mankind.

Thus, through divine adoption in Christ, man takes on an infinitely elevated resemblance to God, Who stamps His living image in the soul of man by grace.

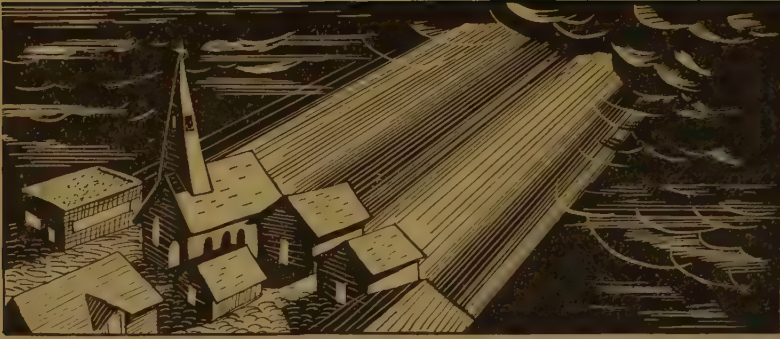
Hence with this double title of citizen of the world and child of God, Christian humanism is firmly established and that fact also justifies pursuits at once temporal and spiritual. On the one hand man can and should take a foothold in the world, as did his Leader, and this is a source of nobility for him. On the other hand, man is called to surpass himself in an infinite way and thereby he already shares in the kingdom of heaven: "Our citizenship is in heaven."⁴³

Thus, the humanism of the Christian is well grounded on all sides, because it proceeds from one firm origin—from God Himself. This conclusion is of paramount importance; it does not enter here as a new problem but rather as the only solution to the theoretical and practical differences which divide Christians as regards the problem of their pursuits.

We need not remind you that we do not intend to settle the far-reaching problem of humanism, or even to give the outlines of it. Others are studying the problem, philosophers, theologians or mystics, and look upon it as a problem which claims an immediate answer. We cannot but stress the importance and the advantages of this study, provided it remains faithful to its own laws and docile to the suggestions of the teaching body of the Church.

In the same spirit which characterized our last Pastoral on the Church, to enrich from within the principles enunciated in that Pastoral, our purpose here is merely to show that the true understanding of God is the only means guaranteeing the supremacy of the spiritual while giving a legitimate and effective basis to the zealous pursuit of temporal affairs.





III

THE RETURN TO GOD

We can now outline, and in a definite fashion, the path to be followed in our return to God—a step most urgent and the true answer to the hesitations of dedicated Christians within temporal pursuits. The solution is not far away. There is no need of suspending action while studying the whole matter anew. On the contrary, we shall never cease to insist upon the indispensability of the methodical effort of our priests and militants. It would be superfluous to insist upon a point so clearly and so frequently recalled by our last Pope. We ask of you a greater faithfulness than ever in your spiritual and temporal pursuits, to which we invited you last year. But an order must be kept in our evaluation of things and a proper spirit must permeate our thoughts and actions.

IN FAITH

We must rectify the basic error of our day—the weakening of our faith, which we showed above as the feature common to all actual deviations.

BELIEF

Many believers are convinced that they have faith while in reality the God they honor is a God made or modified by themselves. They do not accept; they choose. They do not receive Revelation; they build up a God made to their own minds, an imitation that is dangerous and culpable.⁴⁴ We have seen that God is a mystery. His Infinite Being eludes our mental grasp. Our knowledge of the Absolute One is not like the conclusion of a syllogism, or as a “clear and distinct” idea. We reach Him by faith which gives us a sound knowledge, illumined by Love, but

also obscure. The Infinite One is above any human experience. The reality of the Trinity cannot be stated in words; it surpasses all mental activity and intuition.

Must we therefore renounce our reason? No, theological studies show that we are to use this power of our mind. But this intellectual structure does not have its foundations in the human mind; its genesis is in Revelation and it is based on divine authority. Thus, we do not conclude to God from man or from history; we accept Him as He is, marvelous and free, as a fact undeniable and unique.

In this perspective it is possible to understand the world and human life. "God is the First and the Last,"⁴⁵ the "Beginning and the End, Alpha and Omega."⁴⁶ It is not He Who is to serve us; we must go back to Him as to the purpose of our life. By this simple inversion of our direction, all anthropomorphism is removed from our spiritual life; it becomes truly centered in God, in an act of respectful and disinterested abandonment. We leave aside our former touchiness as regards our rights and become more aware of our duties toward God.

All this is not merely a quibbling with words, or mental gymnastics, for practical problems are linked with these principles and thereby solved. For example, take Sunday. What is it for most Christians? A day of rest? Yes, and rightly so. But for how many is it a "Sunday" rest? How many feel that even though they have heard Mass, it is still the Lord's Day, the day belongs to Him, the day which He has reserved for Himself from the current of our occupations and pursuits, so that we may turn to Him in prayer, worship and peace?

PRAYER

But it is in prayer that this return to God should best be expressed.

People pray today, but too much for themselves. Often they even pray too much for others, as when their requests are tainted by self-interest or when such requests take the place of thanksgiving or praise. We must once more become aware of the grandeur and splendor of God; annihilate ourselves before His majesty, humbly admit our sinfulness in His presence, and consecrate our all to His exclusive love.

We must strive to restore, in the exterior manifestations of our religious life, the sense of the sacredness of God, the gradual disappearance of which is regretted by a number of well-disposed

souls. As we are on the point of seeing in Our Father Who is in heaven only a good-natured Providence, and in His Eternal Son only a Companion of human stature, we must replace that point of view in the very heart of our life with the "fear of the Lord" and with this interior and exterior deference (toward God) truly express our feeling of relative weakness. And we shall thus be increasing, rather than in any way diminishing, the feeling of intimacy in the presence of Love come down from heaven to abide within us.

Return to the Sense of Mystery

Consequently, the liturgical revival which is taking place today will happily produce favorable results. It will thus avoid being nullified by the obsession—well-intentioned if you wish, but often blundering in its agitations—of adaptation to modern society. It will find means of keeping alive all the increasing values of life, to conciliate all the linguistic, esthetical and communal elements considered necessary to unite all in a truly Catholic worship. There is no question of going back to harmful individualism which stifled the piety of many generations. We must persist more than ever in fostering group worship. But there must be no fear of having a place for silence in this worship; not the silence of many inarticulate individuals, but the silence of a union which joins brethren together and lifts their souls up to God.

CONTEMPLATION

Admiration and Praise

This group prayer should embrace, or rather be the expression of, a more profound and more secret communication with God. Not every form of devotion is prayer on the same level. The highest form is that spoken of by Our Lord: "When thou prayest, go into thy room, and closing the door, pray to thy Father in secret."⁴⁷ The disciple of Christ must know how to worship God alone in self-imposed solitude, closing his eyes to the world and forgetting his own interests, in mental prayer.

This is the place to mention the word that holds salvation: a return to contemplation. We must recognize that the word "contemplation" frightens people and seems to arouse opposition. It conjures up the thought of ecstasies, apparitions, and other extraordinary mystical phenomena, therefore, most people are apt to consider contemplation as reserved for a select group of initiated souls. On the other hand, this word, so easily misunderstood, holds a certain fascination for our intellectual elite who are under

pell of the delusions of oriental religions. All this comes an illusion. Failing to quench their thirst at the fount of Christian life, they wander to sources less wholesome, or to fountains, from which they return less fitted to cope with the exigencies of daily life. Not all forms of contemplation have the same value. We must not confuse true contemplation with other false imitations of it, nor with unwholesome substitutes in which sentimentalism and high-sounding words create an illusion.

Contemplation and The Inner Life

The term "contemplation" may have two connotations of different value. First, it may refer to the contemplative whose life is separated from that of the world, tends to renew in a lasting way the conversation of Christ with His Father during His long hours of prayer. Contemplatives, who form an indispensable part within the Church, are dedicated by their state of life to give witness to the transcendence of God. Christians have the duty of understanding this role, the contemplatives that of being faithful

to it. But contemplation, in current usage, denotes something more accessible to the reach of all. We are inviting you to the practice of it. You need not be a theologian or a mystic to attain it. All that is required is to withdraw within oneself and to converse with God through a living and present individual. It is mainly an effort of concentration. Instead of diverting prayer to creatures or to persons, it seeks to direct it to God.

How to Face With God

Contemplation consists essentially in having God as the object of the mind, in placing oneself face to face with Him, in going straight to Him just as rivers flow back to the ocean, instead of losing their course in the sands or overflowing their banks in destructive floods. In the presence of this peerless Object, it is sufficient for the contemplative to admire, to be enraptured at the sight of His majesty and to adore Him. It suffices to give free rein to the soul's impulse to sing, to express our gratitude to God for all His bounties, to offer to Him the homage of our daily tasks, of our joys and sorrows and the fruits of our own selves. But above all, we must make ourselves very humble and docile in His presence, and bare our hearts to the influence of His strength and tenderness. Human strength is not needed in this process, only a filial and persevering confidence in the inner grace which works ceaselessly in our hearts, and which draws us constantly to turn to God.

Above all, this invitation goes out to priests.⁴⁸ Not in vain the Church in Canon Law officially exhorts them to such a

practice; not only are they the leaders of Christian society, also they have the mission of revealing the mysteries of divine Love.

The Spiritual Striving of Christians

However, the lives of the saints show that this grace is reserved to priests. The Spirit breathes where it wills. Some souls are favored by providential circumstances in the enjoyment of intimacy with God. Many isolated souls can bring to their brethren a testimony that is of greater value than that of the diocesan apostolate. There is no need of a special type of life to glorify oneself in this way to Love. No life should be unable to devote a certain amount of time to prayer and conversation with God. Closed retreats and spiritual reading will help souls unite themselves more closely with their heavenly Father.

A Return to the Bible

In a practical way the effort to contemplate, which we are exhorting all Christians to practice, consists first of all in going back to sources. Instead of stopping at so many books of secondary value, at so many weak commentaries, the multiplicity of which makes for an obstacle to serious reading—our militants should go back to the text of the Bible and thereby rediscover it. A reaction against the basic theory of free interpretation of Protestantism, Catholics neglected for a long period the infinite richness of the word of God. Today this danger no longer exists and it is with joy that we see an increasing interest in the inspired book. Reared in a world that is scientific, technical and materialistic, our modern intellectuals are unable to find God in the social framework of yesterday. It is by going back to the biblical scheme of the world that they will find God, Who is ever at work amidst passing events. We wish to foster this return to the Bible, but at the same time stress the caution necessary to remain faithful to the deposit of Truth, of which the Church is the guardian.⁴⁹ This spontaneous return to the Bible seems providential to us; nowhere else shall we find a better testimony to the majesty and holiness of God than in the Prophets, the Gospels, the Epistles of Saint Paul and in the Apocalypse.

Sacramental Life

There must also be a return to the sacramental life as a direct consequence of contemplation and as a means of fostering it. If the Sacraments are for the welfare of souls, they have God as their view first of all. They elevate us and dedicate us to God. Viewed in this light, Confirmation, Penance and the Holy Eucharist

ear in a new role—the only true one—to many discerning
s who had not until now grasped their richness and purpose.

IN THE APOSTOLATE

Belief, adoration and contemplation are the first steps in our
rn to a true understanding of what God is. But the problem
he apostolate arises immediately. What place does it have
life given wholly to contemplation? Should it be merely
rated? We need not study again the theoretical value of the
ve apostolate. We have insisted enough on that point. But
ny seek the practical reconciliation of these opposite facets of
istian life. Some are seriously asking whether there is a
damental and mutual conflict between an active Christian life
the contemplative life.

Primacy of Contemplation

One point is certain. Contemplation is primary, and should
be first in practice. For contemplation—that is, the inner life
is nothing but the free manifestation of divine life, begun on
h at Pentecost and in our soul at Baptism. It should not begin
end with devotional practices, but should be identified with
iving faith, so often praised in Scripture.⁵⁰ It is by means of
life and by the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity,
we enter into communication with God Who dwells within
It is a mysterious sweeping-along of the activity of the human
son by the torrent of *charity*, which is the definition of God
ording to Saint John.⁵¹ The inner life consists in the influence
faith on all our faculties, the full development of the state of
ce and the indwelling of the Three Divine Persons. It is the
e of the soul living under the influence of the Holy Ghost.

What is opposed to contemplation is "activism," the
nniques and methods of other endeavors, applied from the
side, and bound to fail because they are artificial. But that is
action.⁵² For true action is the manifestation and outpouring
a superabundant life of faith and love. It is a transparent
dium through which the light of God is diffused: "The Holy
ost, by His radiance in souls purified from sin, spiritualizes them
His contact. Just as transparent bodies become luminous when
ay of light strikes them, and they in turn diffuse light, likewise
souls that are illumined by the Holy Ghost reflect this light
others and become spiritualized."⁵³

Contemplation and the Apostolate

Thus, far from being mutually exclusive, action and the inner
complete and sustain one another.

The return to God in action does not require a greater amount of activity. It merely supposes—and that is a life task—that the Christian place at the very heart of his pursuits a passionate belief in the transcendence of God and the firm conviction that such faith will bring about the necessary adaptations.

The apostolate, as established by Christ, requires a living faith as much as it does method. Prayer is as necessary as knowledge of how to proceed—or rather, the latter must be based on the former. We must go to souls by God. It is in this sense that it has been said that the apostolate goes further than contemplation. It begins with the latter, and aims at the salvation of souls as its purpose. This is accomplished with the help and inspiration of God. The apostle is not held back by contemplation; rather, he finds in it a dynamic force to spur him on. The apostolate arises, therefore, not primarily from love of souls, but from love of God. Saint Thomas wrote, "The basis of our love of neighbor is God; what we should love in him is that he be God."⁵⁴ Saint John of the Cross speaks in similar terms: "The great love of a soul for God leads it to sadness at the sight of the little it does for Him; its joy would be full if it could die a thousand deaths for His sake."⁵⁵ It is this love of God, prompting us with the desire that He be known and loved, that drew from Saint Paul this stirring cry: "The charity of Christ presseth us."⁵⁶

The Living Synthesis: The Saint

It is not an abstract formula that will reconcile these two ideas, action and contemplation, often erroneously considered contradictory. Holiness is the living synthesis of both.

The basic difference between the apostle and the propagandist is that the latter endeavors to win over and to enroll new members, whereas the former is a witness of, and transmits, life. A vast abyss separates them. Pope Pius XII said, "The Church has a greater need of witnesses than of apologists."

Because, by the cultivation of an intense interior life and through rigorous self-denial, the saint has cast off the "old man" and has given free entrance to God, he is at every moment a living witness of His transcendence and of the duties it imposes on us. Because he has preferred the "folly" of Christ to ordinary ways, because he has renounced all, he succeeds in finding all.

Renunciation

To all who, in conformity with their Baptism, wish to dedicate themselves wholly to the apostolate, we recall this indispensable condition of Christian asceticism: let them always keep in mind the universal mediation of Christ crucified. The Mystical Doctrine

nt John of the Cross) wrote, "We must never leave the Cross when we search for Christ." Thereby we shall avoid finding the Cross apart from Christ, as many of our contemporaries do, in their despair.

The first renunciation does not consist of self-destruction in the full living which comes when we neutralize the germs of death in us, our tendencies to evil. This implies the practice of asceticism in the world, as constant, if not as radical, as the purification of religious. Merely to make a man of oneself is not sufficient reparation of our failures. The Cross has not been offered to us as a means of perfecting our humanism. The sacrifices it exacts should be made out of love and for the sake of action. We must recognize that human failure has its own place in action. Why do our efforts often wind up in mediocre results, or even complete failure? Because we had counted mainly on our own strength instead of on supernatural means. Because instead of preaching the Cross, sacrifice and penance, in union with Our Lord suffering and dying for us, we use methods of persuasion which win us a kind welcome among our hearers but bring about no change in their souls. Undoubtedly we must love our neighbor with all our strength. But we must continue to labor until we have succeeded in turning him to Christ. At every moment we shall realize the truth of these words of Saint Paul: "When I am weak, then I am strong—I can do all things in Christ Who strengthens my will."⁵⁸

Cure for Activism

These words indicate the cure for "activism," which is based on a false conception of grace and of human freedom, and which repeats errors of olden times under the name of "heresy of action."

We shall not fear this error if, in our daily strivings and tasks, we keep before our minds the true meaning of God. Because He is transcendent and because "His ways are inscrutable," we shall accept trials, delays, apparent checks to our plans, without being surprised or discouraged. Far from overwhelming us, His greatness becomes the foundation of our hope, of our audacious attempts, of our confidence: "He Who is mighty has done great things for us."⁵⁹ Because He dwells within us, because He is "immanent" as by reason of creation and divine adoption, we no longer rest on our weakness, which so often leads to discouraging failures, but on Love which dwells within us and is closer to us than we are to ourselves. His strength, reserved yet irresistible, works both the will and the performance."⁶⁰

FIELDS OF ENDEAVOR

Thus the saint is the living synthesis of two rich attributes. He is the man of the transcendence and of the immanence of God, the citizen of heaven and the citizen of the world, the man of God and the man of mankind. He is not a refugee, a self-centered man; he mirrors in his person the living image of the living God. That very reason holiness is not only an example to others but the sole condition of a worthwhile dedication of a Christian soul.

This dedication must be based on two realities which are two extremes of Christian humanism: the Incarnation and Redemption.

Dedication: An Incarnation-Humanism

The Christian should not wait to become a saint to dedicate himself. Striving to become a saint gives the right, the duty and the grace to set to work. We insist on the fact that as a rational creature, placed by God at the head of visible creation, the human person receives from this elevation the exercise of royal power which should not remain purely theoretical. The Gospel did not take away the precept inscribed on the first pages of Genesis: "Increase and multiply—possess the land."⁶¹ Man must not submit under the domination of the forces of matter and life. Subject to such forces would be a disorder; but there is no disorder in the possession of the world. Rather, it is man's duty to exercise his possession.

At this point our present instruction hearkens back to a theme which joins with our last year's exhortation to Christians to dedicate themselves in temporal pursuits. We based it on the twofold nature of the Church: on her immutability and on her contingency. This year the duty of Christians finds another basis, deeper and wider, that of the mystery of a Transcendent and Incarnate God.

The Christian is not called upon to destroy or to vilify the world, but to assume it, to sanctify it, to offer it in homage to God. In such a process lies the true incarnation; it is the invasion of the world by the power of God in order that mankind may be uplifted and introduced into the realm of divine life. The true meaning of the transcendence of God throws a revealing light on this incarnation, gives it its signification and bearing. Creation is the work of God; it is so constituted as to be the reflection of the image of God. Far from hating such a masterpiece, the true Christian "rediscovers" creation, because he sees it through the eyes of God and loves it with the love of God. There is no need of a gesture rejecting the world, tinged with a thinly-veiled regret for the charms of created objects, but rather of an outburst of joy that

es the soul to the triumphal fulness of the Infinite Being. A humanism is impossible without faith, for faith alone makes e the world from the point of view of God. We are enabled his theological virtue—"which in a certain degree likens our yledge to that of God—to look at creation with the eyes of reator."⁶²

Hence we know under what conditions human endeavor is ible and legitimate. It is not a question of formula and limins, but of the proper mentality. We must take on all things s to be able to offer all things (to God); we must strive to e our effort of incarnation reach the desired result of ecration. This consecration, by giving back to God the erse which He placed in trust with us, bestows upon the erse a sacred character of orientation to God.

The perfection of this consecration can be found in the prayer Christ after the Last Supper: "Father, I do not pray that Thou them out of the world, but that Thou keep them from evil. . . . ctify them in truth . . . even as Thou hast sent me into the ld, so I also have sent them into the world . . . and for them nctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."⁶³

Such is the effort of orientation which saves Christian anism and which differentiates it from pagan humanism. In latter, all is for mankind and ends with it. On the contrary, former is theocentric: all tends to God, all is for God.

Redemption: The Humanism of the Cross

In this way—the dilemma which was the torment of istians—to be a part of the world or to take refuge in God—esolved. As first stated, the problem had no solution, but it s one in the teachings of the Bible and theology concerning d.

And yet the final word has not been said. If we were holy, fully taken up with love of God, our passage through life uld be for us only an occasion of giving spotless homage to d. But since original sin has placed in us a tendency to make the ultimate end of all, there is no relationship with creatures ch does not carry a temptation to enjoy them in an egotistical y. This results in the violation of the rights of others and ecially the violation of all exclusive love of God. If we forget t, we shall renew the attempt of an entirely materialistic ssianism, for humanism cannot be established unless the stence of sin be assumed. There is only one true humanism the actual economy of the world, and that is a redemptive

incarnation. There is only one humanism for the Christian, that is the humanism of the Cross.

All that we have said about mortification in the soul saint, is to be found at every step of human endeavor in this man. All will then keep in mind that mankind is not capable of indefinite progress. The dogma of original sin and the reality of sin prove this. The sacrifice of Christ is the focal point of earth and heaven perspectives. All other answers will be faulty answers, for there will ever be a tendency to disorder because of the sinful tendency within us. The dedication of the Christian will not be real unless he takes into account, at every moment, not only his "greatness" but also the "misery" of the human person for whom he serves and salvation the Christian has dedicated himself to labor.

There is only one way of correcting the tendencies which we strive to turn us to ourselves, to direct our whole being to God in an act of filial and complete submission, and to prove that we prefer Him to all else by accepting or choosing the path of sacrifice.

But let no one think that the Christian will thereby destroy his happiness. On the contrary, the lives of the Saints reveal that the kingdom of God brings happiness even on earth and that the sacrifice that we have sacrificed will return to us a hundredfold. His life is there to show that the most mortified Saints, before their death, exulted with joy and gratitude. They embraced the Cross and thereby found hope.



IV CONCLUSION

At the end of this inquiry, let us turn to the world and calmly see it with the eyes we had focussed on God. What we see has little resemblance to His peace and serenity. Confusion is everywhere; we are living in a fearful epoch; it is not easy to keep our mind clear and our will calm.

A World in the Making

All is in the process of formation; all is still in preparation; nothing is finished; nothing has been righted. Systems rise, plan follows plan—distress and revolutions as well. If we see the semblance of order in one place, we know that elsewhere it is being undermined. Wars yesterday, rumors of war for tomorrow. World opinion swings between these two follies. Some have built up a system out of these absurdities; most people find in them reason to despair. They are inconsolable because the dreams of an indefinite progress they once entertained have burst. They conclude that there is no hope for a world where man is not good and where fatalism rules.

Anxious Waiting

Silence is the most tragic feature of our present misery. Millions suffer; millions expect to suffer. They do not complain; they are beyond surprise; they are simply silent. A state of weariness and of mystery reigns over the world, reminding us of the awe-inspiring calm before the storm. All feel anguish of soul; all try to conceal it. But it persists nevertheless. In the midst of their silent suffering, how many prepare for a morrow of horror. How many rebel at the statement that such horror is not unavoidable. It is a great evil when this sadness weighs down those who have not accepted the Gospel—but if Christians were to become victims also, it would be a great scandal.

The Salvation of Mankind in God

We know, beloved brethren, that you will have no part with such people. You will not close your hearts at the sight of this universal discomfort, this blood which flows (in abundance), of the rapidly increasing distress. You have already noticed this suffering of your brethren which you share with them and which affects you to the depths of your soul. You feel their sorrow so as to share it with them.

But you draw a lesson from these conditions: namely, that mankind cannot be saved by man alone. This does not mean that all mankind's efforts to heal itself and to achieve progress are in vain. We have praised the splendor of human achievements.

But the evil must be corrected at its very roots. And since the evil of the world does not consist in the absence of man but in the absence of God, the solution to the problem consists in a return to God. The call to action we are sounding is a call to faith as well as a call to action.

A Call to Action

A call to action! You have no right to await events, as do those who have no belief, because events await you. If you are not in the midst of things, anything may happen because there will be nothing to put a halt to the forces that threaten you. If you are there, you can give your contribution to the guidance of events, in full submission however to the Will of God.

It is truly a call to action. This return to God should not be for anyone a reason for inaction, justifying criticism of others who are doing things. We must remember that faith without deeds is a dead faith. It is not a question of acting less, but of acting more, of acting everywhere. It must not be, at the very moment when the world has its eyes fixed on Christians, and the Church on her children, that these should betray their duty, the hopes of all, and the confidence placed in them. Priests and lay people face a task which readily absorbs all their powers of loving, of doing, and of self-dedication.

A Call to Faith

Above all, turn to God in faith. We must keep whole and entire our confidence in God. We know that history is not blind, nor fatal. We believe in Divine Providence. We know that the triumph of evil over good will not be everlasting. We have faith in divine justice and goodness. We know that we are weak, and that He is powerful. At this moment when all seems to conspire to frighten us, we have the example of Saint Teresa of Avila to invite us to fear nothing, to be alarmed at nothing, for God knows all, God sees all, God is all-powerful—and He loves us!

Your most urgent task at present is to pray. Do not stop praying, in spite of the apparent silence of the Lord. Continue to strive "as though prayer were insufficient"; continue to pray "as though action were useless."

With Hope

Thus, instead of going from one extreme to the other, following the guidance of propagandists and disillusioned prophets, you will never be men of little faith.⁶⁴ Harken to these words of the Prophet Isaias and keep them in your heart: "Be converted to me, and you shall be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other."⁶⁵ As in the case of the people of Israel,

the great voice of the prophet exhorts you not to place your trust in Assyria or in Egypt, but in God.⁶⁶

In the presence of increasing dangers, Christians will not neglect to employ temporal means whatever their source but will avoid limiting the present drama to alternatives that are only human. They must not rely on any help they may find on one side of the planet or on the other, for they will soon discover that walls of this type soon collapse, and cause more ruin than the illusions they had previously concealed. It is before and beyond themselves that they will find light and strength. It is in God that they will find the means to remedy the ills that weigh heavily upon them and also the secret of achieving a new and better future. Placed by Divine Providence at the extreme boundaries of the world, at the crossroads of two civilizations, they will know how to choose and prefer the pledges and the reality of hope to the uncertain promises of men.

PRAYER

*"O God, Who dost teach us by the pages of both the Old and New Testaments how to celebrate the Easter mystery, give us such an understanding of Thy Mercy that when we receive Thy present gifts we may also have a firm hope of Thy future blessings. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."*⁶⁷

EMMANUEL CARDINAL SUHARD
Archbishop of Paris

Translated

By REV. JOSEPH LAMONTAGNE, S.S.S.
and
ELIZABETH M. SHEEHAN



FOOTNOTES

¹This term has been the matter of much discussion. We use it in the meaning given it by contemporary writers and also in line with the teachings of Saint Thomas as found in the heading of Question 8, Part 1, "Of the Existence of God in Creation."

²H. Passaic, *The Atheism of Christians*; from *Supplement to the Spiritual Life*, May 15, 1947.

³H. Passaic: op. cit.

⁴Saint Matthew, xiii, 45, 46.

⁵Saint Matthew, iv, 4.

⁶Conc. Vatican, Denz 1806.

⁷Saint John, 1, 18.

⁸Exodus, iii, 20.

⁹Isaias, xiv, 15.

¹⁰Greg. Nyss. In Cant. hom. 12.

¹¹"*Dicimus in fine cognitionis nostrae Deum tanquem ignotum cognoscere.*" (In *Boetium, de Trinitate*, 1, 2: Ium).

¹²The God of Saint Thomas," says Gilson, "is much more inaccessible than the God of Aristotle, Who was that to a high degree. We give Him a place in our Metaphysics without our being able to conceive of His nature, but only 'of what He is not, and what relations all else has with Him.' (Saint Thomas, *Contra Gentiles* 1, 30)" Gilson, *Thomism*, p. 150.

¹³Saint John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Carmel*, 1, Chap. 6: 11, Chap. 8.

¹⁴Saint Thomas Ia IIae, 109, 2, 2.

¹⁵Exodus III, 5.

¹⁶Isaias 1, 4.

¹⁷Jahveh is the "fear of Isaac" (Gen. xxxi, 53; xxviii, 16; cf. also in the same meaning, Hebrew x, 31).

¹⁸Apocalypse iv, 8.

¹⁹Isaias xi, 18, 25.

²⁰Isaias xiv, 5.

²¹Exodus xx, 5.

²²Genesis xx, 1.

²³Exodus iv, 13, 14.

²⁴Isaias iv, 9.

²⁵R. P. Leberton, *Lumen Christi*, p. 5.

²⁶Saint Mark, x, 18.

²⁷Saint Matthew, xxiii, 7, 8.

²⁸The position of the Church is no less clear: "The Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church believes and proclaims that there is only one true living God, Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, all powerful, eternal, immense, incomprehensible, of an infinite intelligence and will and perfection of every kind; Who by reason of His spiritual substance of a unique kind, absolutely simple and unchangeable, must be affirmed as distinct from the world in reality and by His essence, happy in Himself and by Himself, and placed above all that is or that can be thought of outside of Him." (Council of Vatican Const. *Dei Filius*, Chap. 1.)

²⁹Once again Saint John affirms this: "All the wisdom of the world and all human efficiency, compared to the infinite wisdom of God, is pure and simple ignorance. All the riches and the glory of creations, compared with the richness which is God's, are nothing but great poverty and extreme misery." (*Ascent of Carmel*, 1 Chap. 6).

³⁰Genesis xvii, 1; Exodus xxxii, 10; etc.

³¹cf. Isaias xliii, 4, etc. Cf. also Jeremias, quoted in the Office of the Sacred Heart.

³²Acts xvii, 28.

³³Saint Thomas Ia, 2.8.a.i; "Of the existence of God in all things."

³⁴Fr. Sertillange says: "Our very being is engulfed in the being of God, Who is the being of our being, so to speak. That is immanence. . . . On the other hand, Saint Thomas says: 'God is incomparably elevated above all forms of being.' That is transcendence. It is the unique fulness of God which isolates Him and makes Him the 'Holy One' . . . and this same fulness effects that nothing is able to subsist except in Him, with this notional reciprocity, that we express by the word immanence, or in a simpler way, the presence of God in all things." (Sertillanges, *God or Nothing?* p. 87, 88.)

³⁵ Radio broadcast of His Holiness Pius XII to the National Congress of the
fraternity of Christian Doctrine in the United States. (Doc. Cath. 8-12-46)

³⁶ Saint John xiv, 23.

³⁷ Saint John ii, 6.

³⁸ Isaias xiv, 5.

³⁹ Canticle of the Three Young Men in the Furnace.

⁴⁰ Saint Paul to the Philippians ii, 7.

⁴¹ The description of God by Saint Hilary finds here its place: "*Deus totus intra
se, supereminens et internus, circumfusus et infusus.*" The Fathers often
listed on this twofold aspect of God.

⁴² "Saint Albert the Great, the remark is made, terms the world in a rather
ended way 'an accident of God,' so as to signify that it is not essential to God
God is essential to it, just as the substance is essential to the accident and is a
t of its definition." (Sertillange, *God or Nothing?* p. 87)

⁴³ Philippians iii, 20.

⁴⁴ "Above all beings, there is the Unique Being, that is, God. . . . God does
exist because man believes that He exists, but it is because He exists that everyone
who opens his eyes to truth believes in Him and prays to Him."—Pius XI, *Divini
redemptoris*, no. 26.

⁴⁵ Isaias xiviii, 12.

⁴⁶ Apocalypse 1, 8.

⁴⁷ Saint Matthew vi, 6.

⁴⁸ Canon Law, No. 125.2—595 1,2—1367.1.

⁴⁹ As regards editions of the Bible, we wish to remind the faithful that they
are not allowed to read the texts that do not carry explanatory notes. Explanations
are indispensable for the greater number of Christians who with their modern
culture have not become familiar with Jewish History and with the knowledge of
literary types required for such matter.

⁵⁰ "He who is just lives by faith." Romans i, 17; also Habacuc ii, 3; Hebrew
38; Galatians iii, 11.

⁵¹ I John iv, 16.

⁵² The danger of exclusivism is twofold: the apostolate may be limited in its
terior form to a superficial and naturalistic work; such is the heresy of action.
held back by timidity, the apostolate may be concerned only with its interior ele-
ment, piety. This attitude is not consonant with the words of Christ: "I have come
to cast fire upon the earth and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Saint Luke xii,
3.) Pope Pius XII in his broadcast to the International Congress of Sodality of
the Blessed Virgin, at Barcelona.

⁵³ Saint Basil of Caesarea, *Of the Holy Ghost* ix, 22.

⁵⁴ *Summa Theologica* 11a, 11ae, 25.1.

⁵⁵ Saint John of the Cross, *The Dark Night* 11, Ch. 19.

⁵⁶ 11 Corinthians V, 14.

⁵⁷ "If spiritual people only knew how many graces they lose, how the abundant
life of the spirit is diminished when they refuse to mortify their quest of valueless
objects, they would quickly find in the simple nourishment of spiritual values the
enjoyment of everything their will persists in striving to attain." Saint John of the
Cross, *The Ascent of Carmel*, Bk 1, Ch. 5.

⁵⁸ 11 Corinthians xii, 10. Philippians iv, 14.

⁵⁹ Magnificat—Saint Luke i, 49.

⁶⁰ Philippians ii, 13.

⁶¹ Genesis i, 29.

⁶² Saint Thomas, *In Boetium, de Trinitate*, Qu 3, A1; "Faith is a certain
assimilation to divine knowledge."

⁶³ Saint John xvii, 15-19.

⁶⁴ Saint Matthew xiv, 31.

⁶⁵ Isaias xiv, 22.

⁶⁶ Isaias xxviii, 33.

⁶⁷ From the Liturgy of Holy Saturday.

POEMS FOR THE PROLETARIAT

THE BRICKLAYER (A Fantasy)

When I was a child
they told me the story
of Humpty Dumpty—
of how he "sat on a wall
and had a great fall
and all the king's horses
and all the king's men
could not put him together again. . . ."

And now I am a man
and oft I think
that life is a wall
and I sit upon it
rather grotesque
like Humpty Dumpty
and one day
I shall fall
from the wall
and all the art
and all the science
of the world
will never be able
to put me together again. . . .

Save God—
Whom therefore
I serve
since He can render
so great a service to me—
Whom I should love
since I believe in Him—
But He is so strange
Remote
Gigantic
Unfathomable
Mysterious
that I love Him not enough
fear Him more
serve Him surely
yet know
in elementary fashion
that He is my Friend

even though
I am a sorry example
of art
and sit on the wall
of life
homely
forlorn
doomed
to fall. . . .
But why should I not serve Him?
Even though I am absurd?
Did He not make me
ultimately
remotely
mysteriously?
The kings of this world could not fashion me—
nor could prime ministers
nor secretaries of state
nor scientists
nor industrialists
nor artists.

But He fashioned me—
And only He can refashion me
(for my life is dear
absurd though I be
and it is better
to exist as Humpty Dumpty
than to be nothing at all).

Therefore
I have hope
as I sit upon the wall
and I try not to think
of the shattered pieces
that will lie upon the ground—
but I fix my inmost thought
upon Him
and His power
and His glory
and I feel very brave—
a bit cocky—
boastful.

EPISTLE

To All Peoples:

The world is a dark volcano
And we, its escapist custodians
Vainly pretend it is a bright plateau.
Feverishly, we scurry to and fro,
Like madmen in a nightmare,
Building strange citadels and cities.
Long ago, we split our personalities in two
And lost our identities,
We bartered the false for the true
And exchanged our heritage for a mess of
economic porridge.
Now, in this eleventh hour, when
Our only consistencies lie in perversion
Dare we light the candle of prayer
And begin our conversion?

CLINTON O'NEILL

BOOK REVIEWS

The Converted Gentleman

SAINT PAUL

Robert Sencourt
ed & Ward, \$3.50

Many a flaming arrow has sped from the bow of God, but few have rivaled in dramatic trajectory the flight of Saint Paul. His epistles have been the glory and the hair shirt of saints and sinners throughout the Christian era. Words were written twenty centuries ago to edify or reprimand Ephesians, Corinthians, or Galatians, have fallen on receptive ears in Dubuque or hearts in Cape Cod as recently as today and tomorrow. Very little has grown on the vine of Christ that did not have its first blossom in Paul, his life and works. His contemplative grasp, and literary expression of the unity of all things in Christ, anticipated and inspired the *Summa* of Aquinas and the mystical synthesis of Saint John of the Cross.

Just as Christ, in His historic reprimand to the angry zealot on the way to Damascus, identified the persecution of His brethren with the persecutions of Himself, so also Paul has won the privilege of bearing His flesh and in his reputation the scourges and scandals hurled against Him crucified. How often we find that the man for whom Christianity has intellectual delight, only shudders at the cruel historic fact of Saint Paul. For Paul is the clinching argument in the debate between gentleness and the perfection of the gentiles. Before he fell from his horse, not so much newly blinded as for the first time aware of his blindness, Paul of Tarsus, the cultured, the educated, the disciplined, the polished, the law-abiding citizen, epitomized the height of perfection that man can reach by his own efforts. If anything, you must say that here indeed was the Superman, for in him was wedded the religious glory of the Chosen People with the cultural finesse (never since attained) of the Roman Senator and the Greek scholar. At no other time and under no other conditions could circumstances have conspired to produce so heroic a man. He was *before* he was thrown from his horse. He had climbed to the highest rung of the ladder upon which the ever-newly-enlightened climb, only to find that beyond this no man can go except to fall mightily into the arms of God, and from thence crawl for succor to those who profess the paradoxical secret of a triumph that lies in death.

Mr. Sencourt has produced a work for which the least can be said is that it lies many light-years away from the current best seller with a comparable subject—Lloyd Douglas' *The Big Fisherman*. Saint Paul has been reduced to insect-size and set wing-humming on a sheet of sugar-scented flypaper prose. Mr. Sencourt has not split asunder a human soul in the grace that impregnated it in order to make it more *human*. The angry swine have not lately developed a taste for pearls, and for that on Mr. Sencourt's book will give little competition to those, such as Lloyd Douglas, who scatter a more tasty fodder. This is the least that can be said about his book.

The best that can be said about his book will have to be said by a more competent reviewer than I. Before Saint Paul, and Mr. Sencourt's interpretation, I am docile. I am inspired. I am edified. You will take your thoughts from the book. I took these.

Here you have the record of a man's life and his writings. It is though

you were watching a fire in which the fuel spluttered and snapped, blackened and charred and formless, while above it the flame grew gloriously brighter and warmer. Saint Paul in the flesh is the fuel, epistles are the heating, light-giving flames. A bowlegged, bald-pate man gave up his body to be burned way back in the dim corner of history and the flame from that fire kindles in every corner of the modern world.

Saint Paul dispensed milk for infants and meat for men and he was both in charity and courtesy. In him, and in his epistles, the magnificent balance between the law and the spirit was maintained. He called men to the perfection of holiness, and yet reminded them of the obligation of decency. He insisted upon the worthlessness of possessions, and yet he minded men that they should use things well and justly. He said that marriage was a distraction from the things of the spirit, and yet he spoke reverently of the mystery of matrimony and the graces achievable within its limits. There is no doubt left in anyone's mind that the aim was perfection "as my heavenly Father is perfect," yet there is that charity reaching out to help the weak over the tiniest obstacle.

Mr. Sencourt tells the story simply and directly, elaborating with good sense and caution so that you can see the historic props that background the passage of the Saint. He supplies authorities, notes, and appendices at the end of the book as an aid to scholars.

ED WILLOCK

Map of the Interior Life

THE THREE AGES OF THE INTERIOR LIFE, Vol. II
By the Rev. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.
Translated by Sister M. Timothea Doyle, O.P.
Herder, \$7.50

When I first became a Catholic I was puzzled by the doctrine of purgatory. If it were a place where the soul got purified, only more painful than here, and without any merit, why were so many Catholics hovering in the vicinity of the minimum observance? Fasting and poverty and prayer and gaining a victory over all your nasty habits and desires were obviously part of a painful process, but could it be put off forever? Some of my friends held that they would be content with a low rung on the ladder of heaven, and I am sure they were under the impression that they could get it by leading nice worldly lives but devoid of mortal sins and luxurious excesses. They knew they had to die someday but they weren't convinced that they had to die to *themselves* some day, if not here then in purgatory. Father Garrigou-Lagrange says over and over again in this book that purgatory is not just a place of punishment but a place where saints are made, for only saints enter heaven. The process of becoming a saint is the process of death to self, painful to be sure, but infinitely rewarding. If more Catholics realized that it is also inevitable they would set about it early and then they would not only be happier but more likely to obtain salvation and a higher place in heaven, but also the world would be considerably more leavened than it is.

This is the second volume of Garrigou-Lagrange's great work translated. It costs a lot but it's nearly seven hundred pages long and more than worth the price for those who ought to read it. That is true for everyone, because not everyone will benefit from an intellectual knowledge of spiritual growth, and of those who will, many may prefer Saint Ter-

at John of the Cross, or *The Imitation of Christ*. Father Garrigou-
Lagrange as a theologian, and seems to be writing chiefly for spiritual directors.
is not trying to be poetic or inspirational. If the book is inspiring, it
because the subject matter could inspire even in chart form. The book
extremely clearly written. It should prove very helpful to all those
who sincerely desire to advance spiritually and who are in danger of taking
long spiritual paths for lack of direction or confused information.

This second volume deals with the illuminative and the unitive stages
of the interior life, beginning (after some introductory clarification) with
the passive purification of the senses. As usual with the author, it is clear,
methodical, and Thomistic.

No one could possibly miss his major themes. Here, as elsewhere,
he is solicitous to show that the mystical life of infused contemplation is
the normal path of interior development and that everyone is called to
it at least remotely. Few people advance through the second and third
stages because they lack generosity or proper direction, yet all should be
encouraged to progress, each at his own pace. Another of Garrigou-
Lagrange's paramount themes is that extraordinary graces, such as stigmati-
cation, levitation, prolonged abstinence and the like are *not* in the normal
path of sanctification, although sometimes they accompany it. No one ought
to desire or strive for these graces, although God may send them. A
chapter at the end of the volume is devoted to a closer examination of
extraordinary graces.

It would be futile in a short review even to try to discuss the sub-
stance of the book. Here is a map of the glory, and the suffering, and the
peace, which we will attain if we will look up and turn our lives godward.
Although the soul's growth is neither as rapid nor inevitable as the body's
growth, nevertheless one gets the impression, valid I think, that to
grow to spiritual maturity should be almost like growing to physical
maturity. For one thing, spiritual adulthood is the requisite of real ac-
complishment in the apostolate.

Garrigou-Lagrange frequently uses the Saints as his examples, showing
how fruitful their work was after they had arrived at the transforming
union, and become perfectly detached. Profoundly peaceful, they view
the world through the light of the gift of wisdom, and practice all the
virtues in an heroic degree. If the world is so bad, surely it is because
many Christians have not even begun to grow inside. Let us hope that
this book will help to shift the burden of purification and growth from
the Church Suffering to the Church Militant.

PETER MICHAELS

To the Chosen

THE APOSTOLATE TO THE JEWS

By Rev. John M. Oesterreicher
America Press, 25c

For six years we have had
the increasing conviction that
a little private star of destiny
hovers over Father Oester-
reicher. That destiny concerns

the most important apostolate in America and the most neglected—the
apostolate to the Jews.

This substantial, ninety-six page pamphlet, another in the remarkable
Academia Studies series deals with this most mysterious apostolate in a

very scholarly and very heart-moving way. Father Oesterreicher does more than write a wonderful pamphlet, he gives a call for action and brings us a blueprint of an Institute of Saint Peter, dedicated to this work. Father lays down a rugged schedule for such an institute. This review is too short to enumerate all the activities he wishes it to engage in. Suffice to say it is to be a high-g geared propaganda centre with those using and belonging to it having prayer as their first line of attack on the problem of the conversion of the Jews.

Years ago, we helped Peter Maurin run a centre for the Jews. Before that we distributed over five thousand pamphlets for David Goldstein and we have even experimented selling Father Mooney's pamphlet *Why are the Jews Persecuted* at Macy's corner in New York. (The number of Jewish persons that almost broke their necks during those days trying to see the pamphlet, was in the hundreds.) Because of this, we know the difficulties of Father Oesterreicher's attempts. In his chapter on the "Present Position" of the problem, we found answers that we have been puzzling over for years. Father has brought such a wealth of scholarship out of his mind that his writing is a real illumination to this dark mystery. The pamphlet is for seminarians and priests but anyone who is even the least interested in the conversion of the Jews should consider it a "must."

ARTHUR T. SHEEHAN

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YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO AWAIT EVENTS.

AS DO THOSE WHO HAVE NO FAITH.

EVENTS AWAIT YOU.